

Scrutiny Committee Agenda



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Date: 16 January 2018
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A meeting of the

Scrutiny Committee

will be held on Thursday, 25 January 2018 at 7.00 pm

Meeting Room 1, 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Milton, OX14 4SB

Members of the Committee:

Councillors

Debby Hallett (Chairman)
Alice Badcock (Vice-chairman)
Mike Badcock
Vicky Jenkins
Mohinder Kainth

Sandy Lovatt
Chris Palmer
Judy Roberts
1 vacancy

Preferred Substitutes

Yvonne Constance
StJohn Dickson
Dudley Hoddinott
Simon Howell
Monica Lovatt

Ben Mabbett
Chris McCarthy
Emily Smith
Reg Waite
Catherine Webber

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "M Reed".

Margaret Reed
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Agenda

Open to the Public including the Press

Council's Vision

The council's vision is to take care of your interests across the Vale with enterprise, energy and efficiency.

1. Apologies for absence

To record apologies for absence and the attendance of substitute members.

2. Minutes

(Pages 4 - 10)

To adopt and sign as a correct record the Scrutiny Committee minutes of the meetings held on 30 November and 14 December 2017.

3. Declarations of interest

To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

4. Urgent business and chairman's announcements

To receive notification of any matters which the chairman determines should be considered as urgent business and the special circumstances which have made the matters urgent, and to receive any announcements from the chairman.

5. Public participation

To receive any questions or statements from members of the public that have registered to speak.

REPORTS AND ISSUES FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6. Partnership Grants

(Pages 11 - 14)

To consider the report of the interim head of corporate services (attached).

7. Ask the Leader

An opportunity for Committee members, and other registered speakers, to ask the Council Leader any questions relating to the business of the district.

8. Work schedule and dates for all South and Vale scrutiny meetings

(Pages 15 - 17)

To review the attached scrutiny work schedule. Please note, although the dates are confirmed, the items under consideration are subject to being withdrawn, added to or rearranged without further notice.

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Scrutiny Committee

held on Thursday, 30 November 2017 at 7.00 pm

at the Meeting Room 1, 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Milton, OX14 4SB



Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillors Debby Hallett (Chairman), Alice Badcock (Vice-Chairman), Mike Badcock, Ed Blagrove, Vicky Jenkins, Mohinder Kainth, Sandy Lovatt, Chris Palmer and Judy Roberts

Officers: Andrew Down, Adrian Duffield, Emily Hamerton, Ron Schrieber, Mark Stone and Sally Truman

Also present: Councillors Matthew Barber, Roger Cox, Jenny Hannaby, Bob Johnston and Emily Smith

Sc.36 Apologies for absence

None.

Sc.37 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2017 were agreed as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

Sc.38 Declarations of interest

None.

Sc.39 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

None.

Sc.40 Public participation

None.

Sc.41 Planning procedures

The committee considered the report of the head of planning services which detailed changes made to planning procedures in August 2016 and June 2017 and their effect.

Vale of White Horse District Council – Scrutiny Committee minutes

Councillor Roger Cox, Cabinet member for planning introduced this item. Also present to answer questions were Adrian Duffield, head of planning services and Emily Hamerton, development manager, planning.

Councillors Jenny Hannaby and Bob Johnston, members of the Planning Committee, attended for this item. They expressed the view that the changes had been beneficial. In particular, members being able to ask public speakers questions of clarification had improved public perceptions as speakers felt that they were being listened to.

In response to members' questions, the committee was informed that:

- The number of planning applications had increased by 309 from 2015/16 to 2016/17 but the number determined by the committee had fallen from 178 to 90 during this period.
- Whilst the number of applications determined by the committee had halved, there had only been a slight reduction in the number of committee meetings which meant that the committee had more time to consider the major and most contentious applications.
- 26.7% of applications determined by committee in 2016/17 had been called in by councillors compared with 3.7% in 2015/16.
- The reason for each application going to committee was now being logged so that more accurate comparative data would be available in future.
- Officers continued to work with parishes on the new procedures. Training sessions had been provided for parish councillors and clerks.

Councillor Sandy Lovatt, Planning Committee Chairman, expressed the view that new procedures meant that local ward councillors were now working more closely with parishes. They also acted as an incentive for councillors who were not committee members or substitutes to receive planning training so that they could advise parishes on what were material grounds for calling in an application.

Following further discussion, it was moved, seconded and

RESOLVED: to

1. note the report;
2. recommend to the head of planning services that all future reports to Planning Committee should set out in the introduction the reasons why they have been referred.
3. advise the Cabinet member that the committee is satisfied that the changes to planning committee procedures have had a positive outcome and welcome the closer working with parishes that has resulted.

Sc.42 Corporate delivery plan - progress report

The committee considered the report of the head of corporate services on the corporate delivery plan and progress made against actions in the plan. The committee reviewed the progress made to date with a view to providing feedback to Cabinet who would consider the report in February 2018.

Sally Truman, policy, partnerships and engagement manager, introduced this item. Also present to answer questions was Councillor Matthew Barber, Leader of the Council.

The committee considered the progress report and thanked the officers for the clear way in which the information was presented. For the next progress report in June 2018, the committee requested that:

- the start and end dates of each activity should be set out more clearly;
- links to supporting performance management documentation should be included, where appropriate;
- the main issues were highlighted with supporting information as to why any actions were not on track; and
- if possible, the information should be circulated to the committee two weeks prior to the meeting to enable councillors to identify the key issues and the heads of service they would wish to attend.

RESOLVED: to note progress against actions in the Corporate Delivery Plan and ask the Cabinet to take the committee's views into account.

Sc.43 Oxfordshire Joint Spatial Plan

The committee considered the report of the head of devolution and government on a proposed joint spatial plan for Oxfordshire.

Councillor Matthew Barber, Leader of the Council, introduced this item. Also present to answer questions were Andrew Down, head of devolution and government and Adrian Duffield, head of planning services.

Councillor Barber gave a presentation that had been made to the Oxfordshire Growth Board on the proposed housing and growth deal for Oxfordshire, as announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his budget speech.

He reported that, through the deal, Oxfordshire would be required to commit to:

- The submission and adoption, subject to the inspection process, of a joint statutory spatial plan (JSSP) covering all five district councils in Oxfordshire, by 2021
- Plan for and support the delivery of 100,000 new homes between 2011 and 2031 – backed up with a credible plan for delivery, outlining interim milestones and targets as agreed with the Homes and Communities Agency and Government

In return, the Government would agree to provide Oxfordshire with a comprehensive funding package of up to £215m to secure this ambitious housing and growth deal, as follows:

- Up to £60m for affordable housing, provided this delivers sufficient value for money to be agreed in the forthcoming delivery plan
- Up to £150m funding for infrastructure to unlock key housing sites, to be administered £30m per annum for five years
- £5m resource funding to boost capacity to get a joint plan in place and support housing delivery, and

As part of the growth deal, the Government promised to explore options to grant Oxfordshire certain time-limited planning flexibilities, subject to consultation where appropriate.

The first milestone in the agreement was the preparation of a statement of common ground by 31 March 2018.

In response to members' questions, the Leader reported that:

- The housing and growth deal had not specified whether the JSSP was to be prepared under Section 28 or 29 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. He strongly favoured seeking an Oxfordshire JSSP under Section 28 as this was simpler, allowed greater flexibilities and gave ultimate power for deciding where development was planned, to each local planning authority.
- He did not consider funding of up to £150m particularly generous given that it was to be shared amongst the Oxfordshire districts over a five year period.
- The 100,000 new homes by 2031 included those already planned for so represented a relatively small increase.
- However, a firmer commitment was needed from Government than currently offered, including confirmation that any requirement to deliver additional housing would not be counted against the Vale's five year housing land supply.

It was the committee's view that the preparation of an Oxfordshire JSSP would help to fulfil Oxford City's unmet housing need.

Following further discussion, it was moved, seconded and

RESOLVED: to advise Cabinet of the committee's view that, in order for the housing and growth deal to be acceptable:

1. The Oxfordshire joint statutory spatial plan must be prepared under Section 28 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
2. There should be clear evidence of benefits for both Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse.
3. Any motion to Council would need to provide further detail of what the Government would provide in return for the Oxfordshire councils' commitments.

Sc.44 Work schedule and dates for all South and Vale scrutiny meetings

Consideration of this item was deferred to the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Scrutiny Committee

held on Thursday, 14 December 2017 at 7.00 pm

Meeting Room 1, 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Milton, OX14 4SB



Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillors Debby Hallett (Chairman), Alice Badcock (Vice-Chairman), Mike Badcock, Vicky Jenkins, Sandy Lovatt, Chris Palmer, Judy Roberts and Ben Mabbett (In place of Mohinder Kainth)

Officers: Gerry Brough, Adrian Duffield, Ben Duffy, Helen Novelle, Clare Roberts and Ron Schrieber

Also present: Councillors Roger Cox and Elaine Ware

Sc.45 Apologies for absence

Councillor Mohinder Kainth (substituted by Ben Mabbett) submitted apologies.

At the Council meeting on 13 December, Councillor Ed Blagrove had been appointed to the Cabinet and so ceased to be a member of the Scrutiny Committee.

Sc.46 Declarations of interest

None.

Sc.47 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

The Chairman announced that she would be standing down as Chairman for the housing delivery update report.

Sc.48 Public participation

None.

Sc.49 Housing delivery update

The vice-chairman was in the chair for this item.

The committee considered the report of the head of planning services which detailed the council's housing delivery performance since 2011 compared with the housing requirements in the Adopted Local Plan 2031 Part 1.

The report also detailed how the Joint Housing Delivery Strategy (JHDS) would assist in delivering the district's housing requirement and provided details of the council's five-year housing land supply (FYHLS) and the production of the Authority Monitoring report (AMR).

Councillor Roger Cox, Cabinet member for planning, introduced this item. Also present to answer questions were Adrian Duffield, head of planning services, Clare Roberts, principal planning policy officer, Ben Duffy, monitoring officer (planning policy) and Helen Novelle, principal development officer.

In response to members' questions, the committee was informed that:

- The total housing requirement of the district sub areas was 21,061, which was slightly over the overall district's objectively assessed need (OAN) of 20,560 as set out in Local Plan Part 1. This over-provision could potentially contribute to meeting the Vale's proportion of Oxford's unmet need.
- The missing figure in Table 6 for the affordable housing dwellings in 2017/18 (to date) was 137, which meant that delivery in that year was 55 dwellings above target. Since 2011/12 there had been a net gain of 1377 dwellings against a target of 1775 giving a difference of -398. However, the committee noted that the target figures had changed following the adoption of the Local Plan Part 1.
- The large difference between the number of housing completions and target in the south-east Vale sub area as set out in Table 3 was substantially due to a number of large scale developments which were in progress, such as Grove Airfield.
- The local authority considered a house to be complete once it was watertight, i.e. had a roof, windows and doors. This data was used by local authorities nationally to assess the FYHLS and planning appeals.
- The number of dwellings projected for the next few years, as set out in Figure 1, were expected to exceed target.

The committee thanked the Cabinet member and officers for their informative report.

RESOLVED: to

1. Note the report; and
2. Request the head of planning services to submit the Authority Monitoring report to a future meeting.

Sc.50 Slippage of development and housing capital schemes

At its meeting on 28 September 2017, the committee considered a report on the financial outturn 2016/17 and had expressed concern about the overall amount of slippage and, in particular, slippage in development and housing capital schemes. Accordingly, it had requested the interim head of development, regeneration and housing to report to a future meeting on the reasons for the delay in implementing his service's capital schemes.

Councillor Elaine Ware, Cabinet member for housing, introduced the report. Also present to answer questions was Gerry Brough, interim head of development, regeneration and housing.

The committee was informed that some of the budget identified as slippage had actually been spent. However, at the time of the outturn report, some expenditure had not been invoiced or payment for invoices had not yet been received. Once invoices had been received and paid, the changed position would be reflected in the next quarterly budget report.

In response to members' questions, it was reported that:

- Funding allocated for a specific purpose, e.g. to bring forward a housing association project, was not available for any other purpose. If the project could not be commenced then the budget could not be vired for another use.
- Provisional budgeting took place before projects were worked up. This meant that it was not always possible to spend the provisional budget, as intended, in any one year.
- When a housing scheme was delayed or cancelled, the expectation was that the funding would remain available until a suitable housing project was identified. Officers were currently working with potential partners to bring forward two potential schemes.
- The Open Market Homebuyer scheme was dependent upon the receipt of suitable applications from members of the public. Unfortunately, there were no applications for sums less than the residue of funding remaining. This funding would not be carried forward and would be returned to the general budget at the end of the financial year.
- The budget for the implementation of online web advice had been spent but was identified as slippage as it took some time for suppliers to issue invoices.
- The £13,000 budget for housing allocations had been largely spent.
- The budgets for Abingdon housing and Elmside Hostel had been created with the intention of purchasing properties and refurbishing the hostel. However, a review concluded that neither of these projects could be justified within the context of a district-wide temporary accommodation strategy.

The committee thanked the Cabinet member and officer for their informative report.

RESOLVED: to

1. Note the report; and
2. Request the Cabinet member for finance and head of finance to consider the feasibility of including the reasons for the slippage of capital schemes in future budget reports.

Sc.51 Work schedule and dates for all South and Vale scrutiny meetings

The committee noted its work programme.

The chairman reported that longlisting and shortlisting sessions would be scheduled in April and May 2018, respectively, to identify topics for the committee's future consideration.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm

Scrutiny Committee



Report of Interim Head of Corporate Services

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To: Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 25 January 2018



Partnership Grants

Recommendation

That the scrutiny committee considers and comments on the information provided regarding partnership grants.

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the scrutiny committee with information about the partnership grant scheme for consideration and comment.

Strategic Objectives

2. One of the council's corporate priorities is to facilitate sustainable communities by supporting community groups and community events through our grants schemes. The partnership grants help us to meet this objective.

Background

3. The partnership grant scheme has existed in a variety of forms for well over a decade. Historically, award decisions were very informal and the budget for the scheme was based on these informal decisions and then agreed as part of the council's budget setting process. More recently, the cabinet member for grants makes the decisions based on officer advice about each organisation's financial situation, performance targets and business cases where relevant.
4. Over the last three years we awarded partnership grants to the following organisations:

| TABLE 1 | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---|--|
| Organisation | 2015/16 £ | 2016/17 £ | 2017/18 £ | Comment | Purpose of grant |
| South and Vale Citizens Advice | 103,754 | 103,754 | 103,714 | Request for a four-year grant of £103,754 in 2017/18 then a 5% reduction year on year. | Core funding provisionally approved; £98,529 – 2018/19 £93,601 – 2019/20 £88,920 – 2020/21 (5% year on year reduction) |
| Wantage Independent Advice Centre | 57,825 | 57,825 | 57,825 | Request for a four-year grant increased to £95,000 plus inflation for 2017/18 onwards. | Core funding Only one year grant approved in 2017/18. |
| Community First (previously ORCC) | 8,250 | 8,250 | 8,250 | Discussions underway regarding wider support for voluntary sector and community groups. | Core funding |
| Oxfordshire Community for Voluntary Action | 5,000 | 5,000 | 0 | OCVA failed to meet the terms of the grant offer. | Core funding |
| Abingdon Museum | 27,000 | 20,000 | 10,000 | Grant discontinued from 1 April 2018. (See background papers). | Core funding |
| Albert Memorial, Abingdon | 800 | 800 | 800 | Grant legally committed until 2021. | Trust agreement |
| Wantage and Grove Street Pastors | 1,500 | 0 | 0 | Grant discontinued from 1 April 2016 (See background papers). | |
| Christ's Hospital, Abingdon (Albert Park maintenance) | 3,000 | 0 | 0 | Grant discontinued from 1 April 2016. (See background papers). | |
| Total | 207,129 | 195,629 | 180,589 | | |

5. Officers update the grants cabinet member regarding each organisation's position every year before the budget setting period. Last year, officers gave an update to cabinet members on partnership grants and arranged presentations by representatives from South and Vale Citizens Advice Bureau and Wantage Independent Advice Centre.
6. Having received information from officers and consultation with all ward councillors, the cabinet member for grants approved the 2017/18 partnership grant awards on 7 April 2017.
7. Due to financial pressures and the annual requirement to secure committed funding for this scheme, we are currently unable to accept new applications to the partnership grant scheme. We direct organisations seeking funding to our other grant schemes including; festival, capital and new homes bonus.

Financial Implications

8. In February 2017, the council approved the budget of four separate grant schemes; new homes bonus (£100,000), capital grants (£100,000), partnership (£185,600) and festival grants (£10,000).
9. We anticipate a saving of £5,000 from the partnership grant budget of £185,600 in 2017-18. This is due to withdrawal of a grant to Oxfordshire Community for Voluntary Action. See table one, paragraph four for more information.
10. The council will consider the 2018/19 grants budget at full council in February 2018. The following proposals will be considered; festival grants £10,000, new homes bonus revenue grants £100,000 (subject to approval of a growth bid) and a capital grants budget of £100,000.
11. The current proposal for partnership grants is to fund the following four organisations with a budget of £165,366. With the exception of the grant to the Albert Memorial, these organisations offer universal support towards our corporate priorities by offering advice services across the Vale.

| Organisation | Amount £ | Purpose |
|--|----------|--|
| South and Vale Citizens Advice (S&V CAB) | *98,529 | Core funding *as requested by S&V CAB |
| Wantage Independent Advice Centre (WIAC) | *57,787 | Core funding *request of £58,000 received by WIAC |
| Community First (previously ORCC) | 8,250 | Core funding |
| Albert Memorial, Abingdon | 800 | Agreement to provide funds to maintain the memorial. |
| Total | 165,366 | |

Legal Implications

12. The council uses its general powers under Chapter 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to offer partnership grants.
13. Organisations awarded partnership grants must accept our terms and conditions to receive funding. This may include specific conditions for state aid reasons.

Risks

14. There are no risks associated with this report.

Conclusion

15. Officers prepared this update regarding partnership grants following a request from the chair of the scrutiny committee. The committee is requested to consider and comment on the details of the report.

Background Papers

Individual cabinet member decision dated 19 November 2015

Individual cabinet member decision dated 7 April 2017

Schedule for Scrutiny Committees 2017/18

(further items to be added to schedule as required)

| Meeting date | Council | Agenda items | Purpose of Report | Invited | Cabinet members | Report Author | Head of Service | Strategic Lead |
|--------------|--------------|--|---|---------|---|--|------------------------------------|--|
| Tues 6 Feb | South | Review of Final Draft Budget | To consider and comment on the draft budget prior to its consideration by Council | | Jane Murphy | William Jacobs | William Jacobs | William Jacobs |
| Thurs 8 Feb | Vale | Review of Final Draft Budget Houses that people can afford | To consider and comment on the draft budget prior to its consideration by Council To consider what is being done/could be done to increase the number of houses for rent or sale that are truly affordable to the average working family or person | Yes | Robert Sharp Elaine Ware | William Jacobs Gerry Brough/ Helen Novelle | William Jacobs Gerry Brough | |
| Tues 6 March | Joint | Community Safety Partnership Annual Report Spend on commuted housing sums | To update the committee on the progress that the South and Vale Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is making to reduce crime and the fear of crime To receive an annual report on the status of commuted sum payments received and expenditure to date, including measurable Key Performance Indicators. | | Elizabeth Gillespie/Elaine Ware Lynn Lloyd/ Eric Batts | Shona Ware Helen Novelle | Margaret Reed Gerry Brough | Adrianna Partridge Agenda Item 8 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|--|
| | | Review of Communications Strategy | To monitor the effects of the Joint Communications Strategy | | John Cotton/Ed Blagrove | Andy Roberts/Jayne Bolton | Adrianna Partridge | |
| Thurs 8 March (change of date from 27 March) | South | Berinsfield Redevelopment Project | | | | Jon Dobson/Charlotte Culver | Gerry Brough | |
| Thurs 29 March | Vale | | | | | | | |
| Tues 29 May | South | S106 Agreements | To consider the annual monitoring report showing income/expenditure and balances | | Felix Bloomfield | Cathie Scotting/Paula Fox | Adrian Duffield | |
| Thurs 31 May | Vale | | | | | | | |

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Potential items for future meetings (date to be determined):

For Joint Scrutiny

- Unitary process
- Science Vale Marketing campaign (first meeting of 2018/19 Municipal year) To receive an annual monitoring report on the success of the campaign (Mike Murray/ Robert Simister, Joy Kellaway, Gerry Brough
- New Housing Allocations Policy

For Vale Scrutiny

- Authority Monitoring Report 2017-18 (provisionally January 2019)

For South Scrutiny

- CIL Spending Strategy

Items for future South Scrutiny Committee (date to be determined):

- Planning appeals

The Cabinet work programmes can be accessed via the following links:

South

<http://democratic.southoxon.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=121&RD=0>

Vale

<http://democratic.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=507&RD=0>

Meeting Start times: Joint: 6:30; South: 6:30; Vale: 7.00;

Scrutiny Work Item Preparation

Members are invited to consider the following headings for future agenda items

Item name

Date of report to Committee

What do we want to know about? What topics should the report provider include in their report to Scrutiny?

Who to invite to Committee? (Cabinet member(s) and Head(s) of Service). Anyone from outside agencies?